

Competition Judging at GRIPS – Judges’ Handbook

Thank you for agreeing to be a judge at the upcoming GRIPS in-club competition. This handbook contains some of the most important information related to judging at GRIPS.

Categories

Below is a list of the categories for this competition, and a few important notes about the category, especially about rules at GRIPS that may differ from other competitions you have judged in the past. The complete definitions of the categories are in the appendix of this handbook.

Please familiarize yourself with the category definitions and rules.

Category	Important notes
Creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Images must be heavily manipulated and obviously creatively enhanced• Effects may be created in camera, in darkroom, or through digital processing
Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GRIPS Nature category definition is the same as CAPA Nature category definition.• Subjects in controlled environments (zoos, game farms, botanical gardens, aquariums etc.) are OK• Human elements must be minimal unless they are integral part of nature story. For landscape, human elements must not be present.• Monochrome, minimal adjustments, dust/noise removal are OK• Focus stacking, HDR, and dodging / burning are OK• Panorama stitches are not acceptable
Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open theme, no restriction• Images that meet the definition of other categories (e.g. nature, creative) are also allowed to be entered in the Open category
Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a new theme for each round of competition. See appendix for complete definition.
President’s Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a new theme for each year of competition. See appendix for complete definition.

Questionable images

If you feel that an image may not meet the category definition, or may be in violation of a rule (e.g. forbidden editing, presence of watermarks), please bring this up with the GRIPS competition chair and among your fellow judges.

Scoring

We use the O3C scoring model with scores ranging from 5.0 to 10.0, with half points allowed. Excerpt:

Score	Meaning
5	Image has significant flaws
6	Image is a record shot / snapshot but it's ok
7	Shows signs that maker has made the image (e.g. evidence of attention to technical execution, composition, and impact)
8	Image has impact, no technical flaws, may win competition
9	Superior technically, high impact, strong story
10	Outstanding technical, impact, composition, story

Judges' Comments

In addition to scoring each image, we'll request judges' comments on some of the images. A few important notes on providing comments:

- For some images, the image creator requests comments. The three judges will take turns providing comments.
- (For live judging only) If there is a 2.5-point spread (or more) in the scores from the three judges, we'll ask for comments from all judges, followed by re-scoring (you may change your score, or keep it unchanged).
- Judges may provide comments at any time, even if it's not requested. **Especially for online judging, we encourage judges to provide comments to as many images as you can for educational purposes.**
- Judges' comment is a valuable learning opportunity for our members. Please talk about **what has gone well, and what can be improved**, when providing comments.
- **Comments should reflect the score you provided.** For example, when commenting on a low-scoring image, be sure to talk about improvement needed to improve the image.
- **Please make a comment if you have deducted points due to the image violating a rule** (e.g. hand-of-man in nature, image not meeting definition of theme / category, etc.)

Online Judging

Using EntryWizard

GRIPS uses EntryWizard, an online tool for displaying images, and entering scores and comments.



For each competition, there will be a number of rating forms created, one for each category.

A typical EntryWizard page looks like this:

2020-2021 Round 1 Judging Form - Nature Category

When you have finished all the items in '2020-2021 Round 1 Judging Form - Nature Category', please click the button below to notify the administrators of this. The software will first make sure you have actually saved everything correctly, then remove your access to the page.

Show drop-down selections as buttons

Title ↓	Category / *Score ↓	Image File	Comment requested? / Judge's Comment ↓	WP Item ID ↑
Portrait Of A Heron	Nature <input type="button" value="v"/>		<input type="text"/>	432 <input type="button" value="Save All"/> <input type="button" value="Clear Item"/>
Arecaeeae Palm	Nature <input type="button" value="v"/>		Yes <input type="text"/>	443 <input type="button" value="Save All"/> <input type="button" value="Clear Item"/>

A few quick tips:

1. Click on any image to bring up a second browser window, in which a full resolution version of the image will be shown.
2. Enter your score using the drop down list.
3. If "Comment Requested?" is "Yes", you must enter a comment. You may enter comments for any images, even if not requested.
4. You can sort the images by scores in ascending / descending order for any final adjustments, if desired.
5. When completed, click the "Finished ..." button so we'll be notified that your judging is completed. Once you clicked this button, you will not be able to get back to the rating form to make adjustments any more.
6. The "Using this rating form" button will bring up additional instructions.

Monitor Requirements and Viewing Conditions

EntryWizard is best used on a computer with two monitors, with the following requirements:

- Monitor 1 is for displaying the images for judging. It **MUST** be capable of displaying 100% sRGB colour space, and **MUST** be recently calibrated. It **MUST** have a minimum resolution of 1920x1080 pixels, and ideally **SHOULD** have a resolution of 2560x1440 pixels or higher which

allows the viewing of the maximum size image (1920x1080) without scrolling or scaling. [This page at CAPA](#) contains additional technical information on monitor calibration and viewing environment which will be useful.

- Monitor 2 is for displaying the scoring / commenting page. It is optional, but having it will speed up your judging. Any monitor will do.

The recommended viewing environments for judging are:

- The room should be suitably darkened for proper image viewing.
- The viewing distance should be approximately 24 inches for a typical 24-27-inch monitor.
- The monitor should be turned on for 15-30 minutes to allow it to reach normal operating temperature before judging.

Appendix – GRIPS competition category definitions

Entries into GRIPS in-club competitions are grouped into categories as defined below.

Nature

Nature photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archaeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation.

Scientific names are recommended in the image title, but common names are acceptable. “Cute” titles (e.g. “pretty in pink”), vague titles (e.g. “flower”), or generic titles (e.g. “untitled” or “nature 1”) are not acceptable. “Common Mallow” or “Malva neglecta” are examples of appropriate titles. Judges may, at their discretion, deduct points for images violating the above rule. If you are unsure of common or scientific name of your subject talk to your fellow members or post a question on the GRIPS Facebook group.

Subject Matters

The nature category accepts the following subject matters. Please note any restrictions in the descriptions.

- **Botanical** – ONLY wild plants photographed in their natural environment are permitted in this theme such as: flowers, scrubs, bushes, trees, fungi and algae. Human created hybrid plants or ‘**cultivated plants**’ are not permitted. **Cultivated plants** are ones that are planted and maintained by humans as opposed to emerging naturally in the environment. Wild flowers or plants grown in a botanical garden are accepted in this theme.
 - In cases where a plant species is known to occur in the wild and has been cultivated by humans, the judging panel will give the image the ‘benefit-of-the-doubt’ and accept the image as meeting the definition of this theme.
 - ‘Hand-of-man’ elements shall not be present, except where those human elements are integral part of the nature story (10% or less of total image area).
- **Insects, Reptiles & Amphibians** – such as: alligators, ants, bees, beetles, butterflies, crickets, crocodiles, dragonflies, frogs, gecko, hornets, iguana, lizard, mantis, mosquitoes, snakes, turtles, wasps, etc… **“Hand-of-man”** elements shall not be present, except where those human elements are integral part of the nature story (10% or less of total image area).
- **Landscape** – subjects such as weather phenomena, geological formations, landscapes, seascapes and natural phenomena, planets, stars and astronomical events. **“Hand-of-man”** elements shall not be present.
- **Animals, Birds and Marine Subjects** – living animals, birds and marine subjects, either living free and unrestrained, or living under the control and feeding of humans if not obvious such as in zoos, game farms, animal preserves, aquarium, etc…
 - No feral or domesticated birds or animals are permitted.
 - Trained birds, animals and marine subjects are not permitted.
 - **“Hand-of-man”** is permitted in this theme provided that it is deemed as an element of an **“adaptive environment”** (e.g. barn owl) and consists of 10% or less of total image area.
 - **“Adaptive environment”** is defined as:

- Using a man-made structure for nesting or feeding their young or attracting a mate
- Consuming a cultivated plant or flower
- Using a human created structure created for another purpose
- Consuming their kill or food on a human-element such as a sawed log, fence post, telephone pole
- Animals and birds are permitted to have scientific bands, tags or radio collars but no tethers or harness attachment.

Hand-of-man is defined as “all human elements and impacts of human activities”. The following are examples of “hand-of-man”:

- Human - body or portions thereof.
- Sky - cables, telephone/power lines, jet streams, aircraft, light pollution, artificial light, etc···
- Land - man-made structures or paths, buildings, concrete, man-made stone, telephone poles, fences, posts, sidewalk, domesticated or cultivated plants/food, cut grass, organized or systematic laying out of planted trees, etc···
- Elements - cut trees or branches or stems, tree stumps, posts, man-made food, objects or background, etc···
- Sea - boats, ships, piers, docks, posts in the water, etc···

Images taken at locations such as, but not limited to, Canadian Raptor Conservancy are not permitted in the Nature category as these are classified as trained animals but can be submitted in Open, Theme (if the image meets the criteria of the theme), or President’s Challenge.

Editing Criteria

No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted.

Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are permitted including HDR, focus stacking and dodging/burning.

Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise, and film scratches are allowed.

Stitched images are not permitted.

All allowed adjustments must appear natural.

Colour images can be converted to greyscale monochrome. Infrared images, either direct – captures or derivations, are not allowed.

Submitted images must not contain any type of border or digital frame.

Open

This is an open category. Images can be of any subject, type or style of photography. Images may be processed in the darkroom, on the computer or in the camera. Heavily processed images may be better suited in the Creative category.

Creative

These images are not meant to look like a regular photograph. Images must be heavily manipulated and **obviously** creatively enhanced including composites, creative filters etc.

- Image effects may be created in the camera (e.g. zooms, pans, multiple exposures), in the darkroom or through the use of digital processing.
- The intent is a transformation of the original subject for artistic effect and **the transformation should dominate the image** such that the viewer will easily recognize the creative effect.
- Characteristics of a creative entry include (but are not limited to) abstraction, camera movement, manipulation, impressionism, multiple exposure montages, collages, extreme HDR or tone-mapped effects, etc.
- All elements or components included in the image must be the original artwork of the maker. For example, images that contain stock photography or public domain images that have not been photographed or created by the maker are ineligible and will be removed from the competition.

Theme

Each competition round has a specific theme. For 2023-2024, the themes are as follows:

Reflection (Round 1)

Reflection is a compositional element that can add impact and mood to an image, when used appropriately. For this category, the reflection(s) need to be a prominent part of the composition. The reflection can be created by water, metal, glass, mirror, or any other natural or man-made reflective surfaces. The reflection can also be created digitally during post-processing. The original subject that creates the reflection may be included in the image, or may be partially or completely cropped out. The reflection does not need to be “perfect” as in a mirror image, or from a completely calm body of water. Likewise, perfect symmetry between the subject and the reflection is not essential. The image will be judged based on how the inclusion of the reflection(s) improves the composition, creates impact, conveys a message, or express creativity.

Some examples of images that fit this category include:

- Landscape reflected on a calm lake
- Abstract image of the reflection of part of a boat on water with ripples, with the boat itself completely cropped away
- Still-life images using glass or mirror to create a reflection
- Cityscape with reflection from a puddle of rain
- Multiple reflections created using multiple mirrors
- Symmetrical architecture shots with mirror images created digitally

Music (Round 2)

The Music theme uses the same theme definition and editing criteria as the 2024 CAPA Music Competition. See the CAPA website for details: <https://capacanada.ca/2024-music-competition/>.

Urban (Round 3)

Urban photography is a multidisciplinary sphere of visual art aimed at evoking emotions and showcasing urban locations as well as the day-to-day lives of the people working and residing in those locations. Urban photography is about shooting cities and city life. It can encompass architecture, cityscapes, urban environments, street photography, geometry, and urban portraiture.

President's Challenge

The President's Challenge is a category with a single theme through all 3 rounds of competitions within the competition year. The GRIPS president selects a different theme for the President's Challenge for each year.

The theme for the President's Challenge for 2023-2024 is "Motion", defined as follows:

Photography is a medium of still images; it cannot create the illusion of motion the way in which moving images such as film or video can, but the static nature of the image itself, however, has never prevented photographers from putting motion in the centre of their endeavours. Instead of freezing the moment they often strive for capturing movement and the passing of time in a variety of ways.

For this category, the image needs to capture either the subject(s) in motion (or appears to be moving), or to capture a subject with the camera moving (intentional camera movement). The sense of motion needs to be evident in the image. A moving subject frozen in time via the use of high shutter speed does NOT meet the criteria for this category.

Any technical approach is acceptable as long as it produces the sense of motion in the image. Some possible approaches include:

- Long exposure of a moving subject, for example flowing water, moving vehicle, flowers blown in the wind, snow flakes, and star trails.
- Intentional camera motion.
- Capturing a moving subject using panning technique to render the moving subject sharp and the background blur.
- Capturing multiple still images of a moving subject using strobes or multiple exposures, or via composite created via post-processing. Note that the resulting image needs to be a single photographic image consisting of the subject appearing multiple times against the background. A series of separate images arranged on a single canvas does NOT qualify.
- Motion blur created digitally to create a sense of motion out of a still image.